

Baker Art Gallery
232 South High Street,

HABS No. OH-2213

at the southeast intersection of High and Rich Streets
Columbus
Franklin County
Ohio

HABS
OHIO,
25-COLB,
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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

BAKER ART GALLERY

HABS No. OH-2213

Location: 232 South High Street, at the southeast intersection of High and Rich Streets, Columbus, Franklin County, Ohio.

Present Use: Scheduled to be demolished to make way for redevelopment of the city.

Significance: The building is based on the Florentine Palazzo type of the Italian Renaissance, and as such lends an historical reinforcement to a commercial enterprise. It housed for many years the studio of Lorenzo Baker and John Schneider, famous photographers in their day

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1924.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is a list of past property owners for this building. Source of these records is Franklin County Recorders' Office.

Frederick W. Schueller	1904
Duane H. Baker and John Schneider	October 28, 1920
Baker-Schneider Realty	February 7, 1929
Sara B. Schueller	March 16, 1936
Margaret S. Vorys,	
Dorothy Ann Schueller,	
Virginia Louise Schueller,	
Elizabeth Degan Schueller	December 28, 1938
Margaret S. Vorys, Trustee	June 9, 1939
Herman Vorys	May 12, 1950
Dorothy A.S. Tussing	March 9, 1955
Dorothy A.S. Tussing	February 2, 1976
Edgar J. Owen	March 3, 1976
City of Columbus, Ohio	April 28, 1978

B. Historical Context:

Lorenzo Marvin Baker, founder of the Baker Art Gallery, was born in Copenhagen, New York, on April 20, 1834. He began taking photographs in the 1850s in Ohio, and by 1870, had established himself as a photographer. One of his employees, John S. Schneider, was made a

partner in 1878; together they ran a highly successful enterprise whose clients included Presidents Hayes, McKinley, Taft and Harding. Schneider was elected President of the Photographer's Association of America in 1895. The Baker Art Gallery acquired a national and international reputation, attracting prominent political figures, theatre personalities and military personnel for portraits. Among the awards the photographers received were: Photographers' Association of America Gold Medal, 1889; Chicago World's Fair, Highest Award, 1893; Photographers' Association of Germany, grand prize, 1897; other awards were received in Sweden, Italy, England and France. After Baker's death in 1924, ownership of the business remained in the family, moving to another address in 1939. The Baker Collection of historical photographs is now a part of the Ohio Historical Society's archives.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The building has certain typical Renaissance Revival features, though not elaborate in appearance. They include pilasters, rectangular and arched windows and an overhanging roof.
2. Condition of fabric: Although subjected to interior water damage, and gutted of all interior wood paneling by the present owners, the building as a whole is in excellent physical and structural condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The rectangular building measures 25' x 40' and is 50 feet high. The front elevation is three bays wide and the side elevation is four bays wide.
2. Foundations: Not known.
3. Walls: Brick faced with cementitious stone, light grey in color. First floor walls have rustication look. Flat pilasters occur at fourth story, between the windows. There are several decorative panels, shields and keystones on the walls.
4. Structural system, framing: Brick bearing wall system is used to carry beams which in turn carry concrete slab.
5. Porch: The arched main entrance is set back a few feet from the sidewalk. Surrounding it are semi-circular windows with paneling.
6. Chimneys: Functional flues.

7. Openings:

- a. Doors: The main entrance door has a glass panel. Rear door is of flush type with a concrete surround.
- b. Windows: Street-level arched windows are inoperable. Upper floor windows are operable casement windows. Fourth floor windows have balustrades.

8. Roof: The roof is hipped with an overhang of 3-1/2 feet. It is of steel frame construction and is covered with terra cotta tile.

9. Exterior stairway: A steel escape stair is in the rear of the building.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Use of each floor is indicated below:

First floor-reception, display and office
Second floor-studio
Third floor-studio
Fourth floor-studio
Attic floor-mechanical

2. Stairways: The staircase from first to second floor is curved with travertine steps and is of steel construction. A small, circular steel staircase leads to the upper floors; on the intermediate landing are the toilets.

3. Flooring: Concrete slab; in most cases it is covered with padded carpet.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: All interior partitions are clay tile with plaster finish or original wood paneling, which has been removed.

5. Openings: First floor thruways are arched. All doors are flush.

6. Decorative features and trim: Patterned brackets under concrete beams; denticulated ceiling trim.

7. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Lighting: Fluorescent fixtures, ceiling mounted.
- b. Elevator: Small passenger elevator.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Property Transfer records, Franklin County Courthouse.

Ohio Historic Inventory Form, Ohio Historic Preservation Office,
Ohio Historical Center, Columbus, Ohio, 1978.

Baker Collection of Historic Photographs, Ohio Historical Society
Archives, 1982 Velma Avenue, Columbus, Ohio, 43211

"Synopsis of the Baker Collection" by Ohio Historical Society,
Columbus, Ohio

2. Secondary and published sources:

Sanborn's Fire Insurance Atlas of Columbus, 1921-1950

Columbus City Directory, 1916-1960

Prepared by: Steven M. Elbert
Karlsberger and Associates, Inc.
Columbus, Ohio
1980

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was the result of an agreement between the Capitol South Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation, Columbus, Ohio, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Washington, D.C. in compliance with Executive Order 11593 as a mitigative effort in the completion of the redevelopment plan. Steven M. Elbert of Karlsberger and Associates, Inc., Columbus, Ohio, prepared the written documentation and also took the photographs. Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington, D.C. office, edited the documentation in the winter of 1982, for transmittal to the Library of Congress. John A. Burns, AIA, was the HABS project co-ordinator.